

*Ammonites Flindersi* (M'Coy).

Discoid moderately compressed; periphery narrow, obtusely rounded; whorls  $4\frac{1}{2}$ , about one-fourth of the width of each exposed in an obtusely angular-edged, flat-sided umbilicus; surface crossed by obtuse sigmoid striae, some of which are more prominent than the more numerous intervening ones; diameter, six inches; proportional thickness, 29-100th; width of last whorl, 49-100th; seven much divided lobes in the septa of each side, two of which are within the edge of the umbilicus.

This ammonite, in size, number, and involution of whorls, shape, markings, and septa, is so nearly identical with the very common *A. Beudanti* (Br.), of the French Lower Chalk, that, but for being slightly less compressed, and a slight difference in some of the septal lobes, it could scarcely be separated even as a variety. The specific name is given to call attention to the locality.

ART. V.—*On the Desirability of Establishing the Geographical and Ethnographical Section under Law 60.* By THOMAS E. RAWLINSON, ESQ., C.E.

[Read 4th September, 1865.]

Situate in a young community, which (in this quarter of the globe) occupies the position of advance guard, in the civilization of the nineteenth century, it appears to me to be almost unnecessary to advance any particular argument, to convince the members of this Society, of the great importance of collecting the ethno and geographical facts within their reach, for the purpose of rendering permanent, a knowledge of things which are passing away, and of giving wider and more rapid publicity to discoveries, which are now being, and have been made, relative to the character, form, and capabilities of our adopted country and its aboriginal races.

Assuming that the general principle (of the desirability of securing the above objects) is admitted, I will proceed to advert to the objects themselves, and why this Society especially should concern itself in the matter.

At the present time, our geographical knowledge of the interior and around the coasts of Australia is gradually widening, but it is neither so full, or authentic, in all cases,

as could be wished; but there is little doubt, there exists a large amount of what I may call "floating knowledge" of remote localities, which at present is lost to the community owing to the want of some channel of communication between the bushman and the public at large.

The ethnology of the country, is likewise, in a very imperfect state, although, in this instance also, it is comparatively well-known, that a large amount of native lore, relative to the dialects, manners, customs, and habitats of the Aborigines, is in possession of the frontier settlers and others, such lore having been acquired during a long residence in this country, in close contiguity with the native tribes. In most cases, this knowledge serves but as a basis for conversation and anecdote, between the settlers and strangers visiting them, whilst from diffidence mostly, but no doubt also from some vague feeling, that such knowledge is of no particular value, it remains hidden from the world. To those who have spent much time with the frontier settlers, many instances will occur, of gentlemen having considerable knowledge of these matters, but diffident as to its value. I have at this time in my mind, the recollection of one gentleman in particular, who is possessed of considerable information on these matters, but whom hitherto, I have failed to persuade to render such information in a permanent form, from doubt whether it may be of sufficient importance. I feel convinced that much of this diffidence will be overcome, and a motive furnished for the exertion of committing to writing facts already known, and be an inducement to acquire more, if it becomes known that this Society is actively moving in the matter, and prepared to receive such information on the various branches of the subject, tending to illustrate the moral and physical character of the Australian tribes.

In addition to such sources of private information, this Society possesses the requisite organization for prosecuting its researches, through channels and by agencies which are scarcely open to a private individual. I allude to the public officers and departments of the several colonies, through their respective Governments, who, I assume, would willingly render all possible assistance in the objects proposed if sought for by the Royal Society.

Lastly, that by diffusing information as to the exact nature of the facts required, and the objects to be served, a system of inquiry will be the result, and the gentlemen engaged,

having a definite object before them, will have a greater interest, and more zeal in the work.

The interesting paper in our last volume from the pen of Mr. Beveridge, on the Murray Natives, is a fair sample of the information possessed by the settlers and others, and there can, I think, be little doubt that by giving a judicious direction, and an object to the inquiries of such gentlemen, a very large amount of valuable information will be obtained by them, in addition to the facts already in their possession.

That such inquiries as those I now suggest, more especially in reference to ethnography, should be taken up without delay will admit of little debate, for it is well known that many of the native tribes are rapidly disappearing, and in all human probability in a few years, some of them will be extinct.

Such is virtually the case with the natives of Tasmania. Whilst in New South Wales and Victoria, and, I am informed, even so far north as Riverina, they are rapidly disappearing. The formerly numerous tribes of the Yarra Yarra, the Goulburn, Gipps Land, Geelong, and other parts of Victoria, have dwindled to a few scores, and those remaining, unless more fortunate than their brethren of Tasmania, must in a few years, like them, die out.

Under such circumstances it is high time that this, or some other kindred Society, should initiate the requisite steps for obtaining, and rendering in a permanent form, the most complete available records of the manners, customs, and dialects of the native tribes, together with such measurements and portions of the skeletons, which are necessary for comparison with each other, and with remoter nations.

Of the various tribal languages or dialects, the most copious vocabulary is desirable, of words referring to simple things of common use, not only for comparison with each other, but with those of the nations and tribes of other portions of the world, to assist in elucidating the problem of human affinities, and the original derivation of stock.

Some progress has already been made in this branch of science by explorers, and by ethnologists who have visited our coasts from time to time, but from the limited sources of information within reach of most of them, little more than the boundaries of such knowledge has been passed, and it yet remains as a reward, for the persistent efforts of some society, having the requisite organization and machinery, to eliminate full and complete information on these questions whilst such

information is obtainable, and it is to the performance of such a duty I now invite the members of this Society.

The manners and customs of the Aborigines, would necessarily be an accompaniment to any inquiry into their dialects, but with this difference, that much greater circumspection will be requisite to eliminate truth from fiction—actual well-established usage and faith (if any) from artifice and invention.

To the above general sketch of the information required, I may add, that the inquiries instituted will, in all likelihood, render possible the compilation of a map, showing the distribution of the various tribes, and may also throw some additional light on the peculiar productions of some of the less-known regions of the country.

For the accomplishment of the above objects I beg to propose the formation of Section E, for Geographical and Ethnological Science, under Law 60, and that Professor Halford, Mr. Gideon Lang, Mr. J. J. Stutzer, Mr. James Bonwick, and myself, be the first members, and that Professor Halford be the chairman of the section.

ART. VI.—*Probable Astronomical Causes of the Contortions in Palæozoic Strata, and the Prevailing Meridional Strike of the Older Rocks of Victoria.* By THOMAS HARRISON.

[Read 16th October, 1865.]

At the very commencement of this paper, I would especially wish to disclaim aught like a desire to set up a theory. At the utmost I simply ask leave to read before your Society certain notes and observations which have occupied my attention for the past three or four years. I do even this interrogatively. I lay the various facts and reasonings before you as a humble seeker after truth, and not as one by whom truth has already been discovered.

To my mind there seems to be some show of reason in what will be advanced. That, however, will be for your Society to determine. Should I be so fortunate as to have, almost inadvertently, hit upon the solution of a geological difficulty, I am well assured all present will rejoice equally with myself. Or if, on the other hand, I have been pursuing a mere shadow, the sooner my eyes are open to the error, the